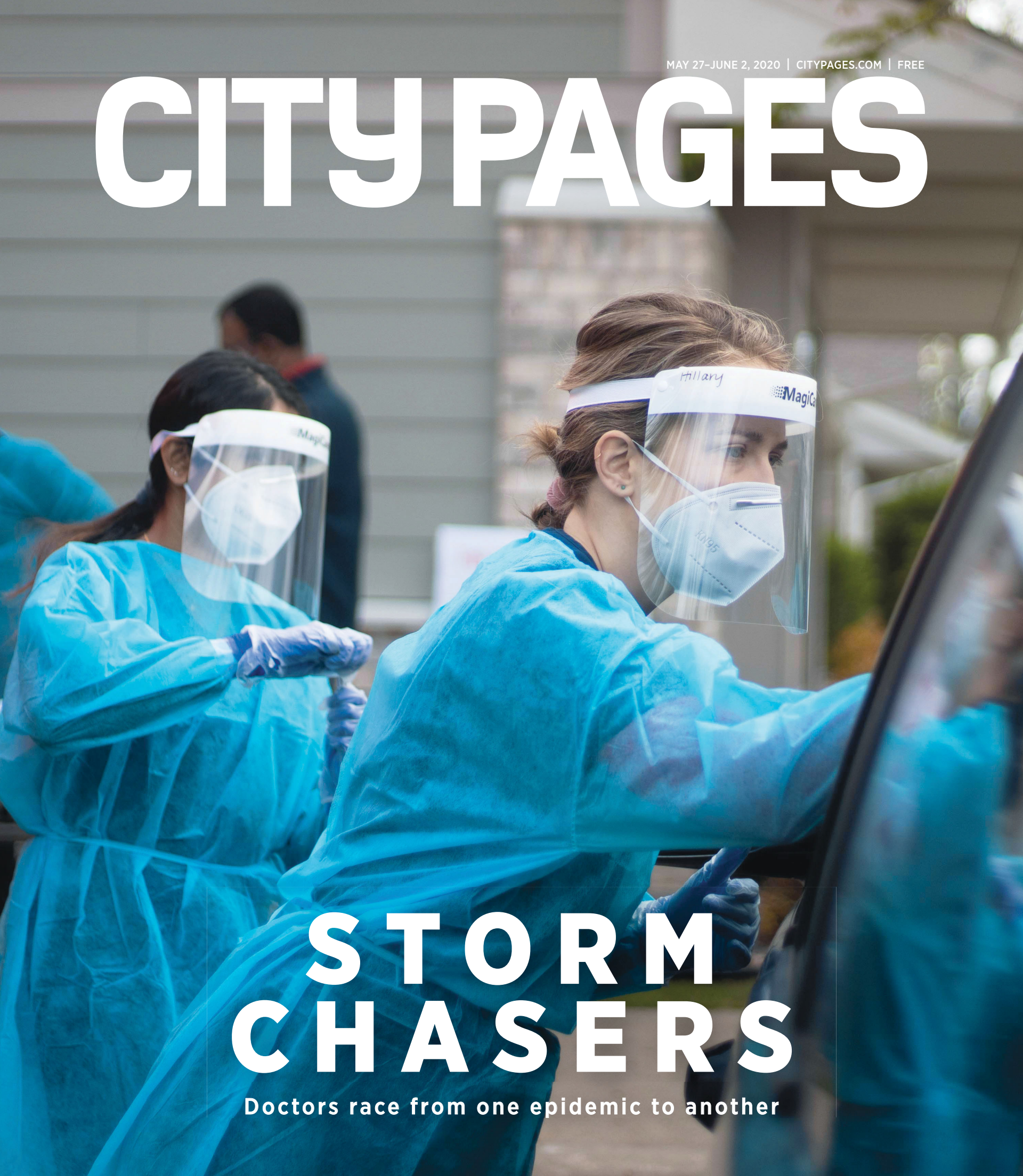


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A photograph of two healthcare workers in full blue protective suits and face shields. The worker in the foreground is wearing a white N95 mask and a clear face shield with 'Hillary' and 'MagiCa' written on the top. She is looking down at something in her hands. The worker in the background is also in a blue suit and face shield. They appear to be working outdoors, possibly at a drive-through testing site.

STORM CHASERS

Doctors race from one epidemic to another



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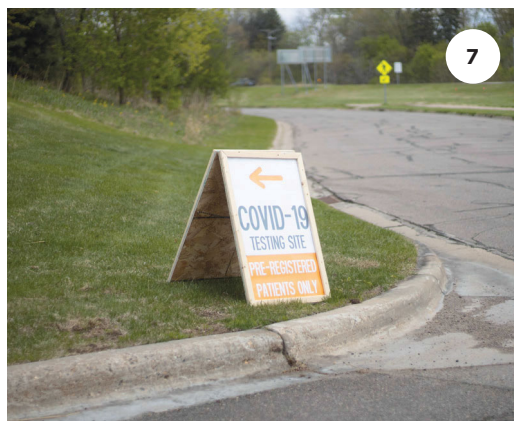
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Doctors race from one epidemic to another

By CP Staff

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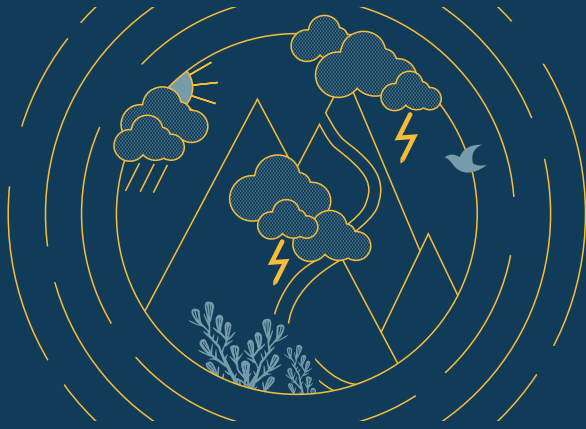
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THE SHORTLIST

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RENEE JONES SCHNEIDER

THE STAT SHEET

44%

Minnesotans in a new poll who are "very worried" (10 percent) or "somewhat worried" they'll contract coronavirus

44,000

Estimated number of Minnesota "snow-birds" who spend warmer months here after wintering somewhere else

18%

Republicans in the same poll "very worried" (0 percent) or "somewhat worried" about catching the virus

6

Years the Minnesota State Fair has been canceled since 1859, most recently in 1946 to curb the spread of polio

"Yeah, pretty sure I won't ever dine in a Bartmann restaurant again."

Reader Andy McClure responds to "Kim Bartmann has almost paid back her employees... unless you ask her employees."

READE-ING THE ROOM

Months after enthusiastically endorsing Bernie Sanders for president, DFL U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar finally had something to say about presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden. And it is that she believes his accuser, Tara Reade, a former Biden staffer who says he sexually assaulted her in the early 1990s. "Justice can be delayed, but should never be denied," Omar told the Times of London. On Twitter, Omar said she would still "vote for Biden and help him" against Donald Trump, but that, "Believing survivors is in lockstep with my values."

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COMMUNITY EFFORT

New fund offers direct aid to Minnesota LGBTQ residents

A disturbing report published last month revealed just how many queer and trans folks suffer from food insecurity—as in, not knowing where your next meal is coming from.

Using data on some 160,000 adults in 2017, researchers at the Williams Institute found queer and trans people represent an outsized portion of food insecurity in America. Roughly one in four members of the LGBTQ community experienced food insecurity the previous year. Women, people of color, young adults, and people with low incomes are particularly at risk.

If finding money to eat and keep a roof over your head was hard before COVID-19, it's a lot harder mid-pandemic.

Monica Meyer, director of queer and trans advocacy group OutFront Minnesota, says many LGBTQ people in

Minnesota are struggling to make ends meet, and without public assistance.

"A lot of people, for whatever reason, didn't get any of the stimulus money, and aren't getting any kind of unemployment benefits," she says. "And they're worried about being able to keep their housing and eat."

Thanks to money contributed by several benefactors—including the Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis Foundation—OutFront has a fund for queer and trans Minnesotans who are down and out thanks to COVID. Food, housing, you name it.

Benefits are distributed in onetime sums between \$250 and \$2,500. OutFront is accepting applications throughout the month of May.

"We tried to make the process to fill out



NICOLE NERI, STAR TRIBUNE

the application as simple as we could," Meyer says.

OutFront has \$92,500 to distribute—a nice start, but 226 people had already applied for financial support as of Friday,

and those requests combined would cost upwards of \$250,000. OutFront is asking anyone who's willing and able to donate, which you can do at the organization's website. —HANNAH JONES



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STORM CHASERS

Doctors race from one epidemic to another

BY SUSAN DU

I. A ROLL OF THE DICE

In the Cliff Cove neighborhood of suburban Burnsville, Drs. Ashwin George and Svetlana Zaydman run a small practice called Valley Medical. There, they treat patients living with chronic pain and their addictions to the anesthetizing firepower of opioids, meth, and alcohol.

The doctors are both immigrants. He hails from India and she from Russia. They met during their residency in New Jersey. When they first went into business together six years ago, pairing Zaydman's pain specialty with George's

chemical dependency experience, it was still something of a novel concept.

The opioid crisis that gripped the nation in the years since kept the doctors busy. They opened clinics in Minneapolis and Woodbury, employing about 40 full-time staff.

Minnesota's first recorded COVID-19 case appeared on March 1, and its spread soon forced clinics like theirs to make an abrupt pivot into virtual healthcare. At Valley Medical, the doctors rolled out curbside and telehealth appointments, restrictive adaptations that weigh heavier on Valley's patients than most.

In hopeless times, the path from addiction to sobriety seems to narrow into a

tightrope. Chemical dependency experts often say the root of addiction is isolation. Casualties of the coronavirus include in-person support groups like Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous and therapy sessions. Telehealth does nothing for people who don't have internet or cell phones robust enough to host video calls.

The opioid crisis is growing stronger even as it joins all of America's other problems in the back seat.

If testing were widespread, policymakers might have a better sense of how life could work around the virus. Valley patients who test negative could go back to work. They could gain entry to group homes that are wary of new residents.

Drs. Svetlana Zaydman and Ashwin George treat patients recovering from opioid addiction. To give their patients access to COVID tests, Valley Medical had to make them from scratch.

They could see their sponsors and their friends in recovery.

One day in April, Zaydman suggested Valley Medical start testing for coronavirus.

The fight against COVID had come to resemble a world war effort, with everyone on the same side, and the critical hour for testing had arrived. But the southern metro areas surrounding Valley's clinic—including Burnsville, Eagan, and Apple Valley—shared just a single testing center,

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The logistical landmines were plenty. Valley has a small toxicology lab for urine drug testing, a chemical discipline, whereas COVID-19, a zoonotic disease thousands of years in the evolutionary making, is a matter of molecular biology. They'd need a larger lab, for starters. Complicated new equipment. A specialist to operate it. Nurses to swab patients. Sufficient industry-standard masks and scrubs to protect them.

They'd never attempted anything on that scale. It would be ridiculously expensive. Not to mention, they'd have to track down the tests themselves, along with the chemical reagents needed for processing them—ingredients that large hospital systems and governments alike were competing to buy from limited vendors.

It was impossible, thought George. But then he ruminated, spending two sleepless weeks scouring scientific literature and the news for information about supply bottlenecks and how large research institutions around the country were finding ways around them.

Time was of the essence. The doctors decided they would roll the dice. Valley Medical would become a COVID-19 testing center.

II. CYCLES OF PAIN

Behind the doctors' sudden fixation on COVID-19 testing is an addiction recovery community in a state of suspension.

Valley Medical stayed open so patients living with intractable pain could get vitals checked and prescriptions filled, their physical therapy and emergency joint injections. Those without coronavirus symptoms could make in-person appointments, but the doctors wanted those with the slightest cough or fever to get tested for COVID-19 first.

Patients kept saying it was impossible. Short of life-threatening complications, hospitals weren't testing anyone.

"We were like, 'What is going on here? Why is nobody being tested?'" said George. "It's because there are really no tests available, and symptomatic patients had nowhere to go."

For patients in recovery, the pandemic also dealt a blow to their group treatment programs.

Kenneth Roberts, 16 years sober, is the chief clinical officer of NuWay, an intensive treatment program that serves more than 1,000 clients across Minnesota daily.

His wife is also in long-term recovery, and while the pandemic rages on, they've been trying to stay in touch with extended family virtually. While the boredom and stress of quarantine magnified signs of substance abuse that had existed only in a latent way before, trying to manage it all by Zoom posed a formidable chal-



SUSAN DU

lenge. Roberts understands what NuWay's clients are going through.

In addition to the opioid crisis, Minnesota's addiction counselors are dealing with a concurrent wave of meth, Roberts says. By the time policymakers declare one drug an epidemic and levy huge resources to fight and regulate it, another is ready to take its place. Addiction's just a void that almost any drug can fill.

serves inmates of the Hennepin and Dakota County jails. Valley's Minneapolis clinic is embedded in Create's headquarters, while Create has an office inside Valley's Burnsville location.

Executive Director Lynn Allar says that while many of Create's clients are being released because the crowded living conditions of detention centers pose an outsized risk of viral spread, the chal-

Medical assistant Nupur Kamat and registered nurse Hillary Schmalz collect samples in Valley Medical's Burnsville parking lot.

III. HOMEMADE REINFORCEMENTS

Once Valley Medical decided to provide COVID-19 testing for their patients, Zaydman assumed command of the usual practice while George concentrated all his energy on developing their diagnostics lab.

Their upstart operation had to find a way around the obstacles keeping the government and corporations from rolling out widespread coronavirus testing in America.

From the onset, scientists raced to design a test for the disease, trace its path, and isolate the infected. As COVID-19 engulfed Wuhan, the Chinese government published a map of its genetic material—the key to identifying the virus.

In February the CDC created America's first and only COVID-19 test, and sent copies to states' public health labs, including Minnesota's. But there was a problem. When scientists tried to verify these tests, even distilled water—used as a negative control—tested positive for coronavirus.

"It points to a contamination somewhere along the line," said Sara Vetter of the Minnesota Department of Health. "Our worst fear as a laboratory was that it's ours, that we did something. But then as our lab started talking, we realized it was a much bigger problem."

“The solution to addiction isn't sobriety. It's community.”

One of the proverbs used around NuWay is, “The solution to addiction isn't sobriety. It's community.”

“So if we're saying the antidote is community, meaning connecting with other people, then the pandemic has basically said, ‘OK, that's out the window,’” Roberts says.

“I know we do great clinical work at treatment but I think any of our counselors or staff will also tell you that some of our most useful and valuable time with clients is when they're on their break and interacting with one another. That's not happening right now.”

Valley is also deeply entwined with Create, a Twin Cities recovery program that

lenges of finding housing for people with a criminal record have multiplied.

Many group homes have a moratorium on admissions. Some require anyone coming out of jail to quarantine elsewhere before moving in. Meanwhile, people have to find friends to crash with for two weeks—a lot to ask even in times of abundance.

“I don't see anything changing until there is a vaccine and that vaccine is available to everyone no matter their health insurance status,” Allar says.

“I'm just hoping there are a lot more Dr. Georges out there that can do this, so we can keep things moving and make testing accessible to as many people as possible.”

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The CDC, the nation's first line of research on new infectious diseases, was no factory. While it got the basic design of its test kit right, it failed to properly manufacture as many as the states wanted.

So commercial diagnostic companies like LabCorp and Quest stepped up. But their test kits and the equipment used to process them were elusive and expensive, requiring brand-name chemicals and proprietary parts.

Large hospital systems clamored over a finite supply of test kits and the most basic of raw materials, like the nasopharyngeal swabs that slide into patients' nostrils. Reports came from around the country that the federal government was outbidding states—including Minnesota—for N95 masks that nurses had to wear while they took samples from patients, and seizing vital cargo local governments ordered from Asia. Governors countered by rerouting flights and stockpiling supplies in top-secret warehouses guarded by state police.

"That's what the problem is, that everybody wants that same equipment and that same reagent," George realized.

"I read everything about how [the test] is done. I reached out to the University of Minnesota's genomics lab and picked their brains. And then I read about bottlenecks and figured out OK, there is a way to do this, but we must go around these bottlenecks."

One of the U of M researchers George called for advice was Dr. Andrew Nelson, a molecular pathologist instrumental in Minnesota's testing breakthrough.

In March, the medical school came to the conclusion that Minnesota wasn't going to acquire a sustainable supply of tests anytime soon. The dean challenged Nelson and other geneticists at the U's molecular diagnostic lab to cook up a homemade test, one that could be fast-tracked for FDA approval if it was only used in-house and not sold for profit.

The scientists delivered, following a recipe based on the CDC's basic design but using research-grade chemicals that allowed the school to circumvent the supply shortages stymying the production of commercial tests.

The university converted two research buildings in its Biomedical Discovery District into a COVID-19 testing facility and joined forces with the Mayo Clinic, which had been racing to develop its own test.

These efforts by Minnesota's heaviest hitting research institutions led to the state's mid-April breakthrough, when Gov. Tim Walz promised tests would soon ramp up to 20,000 daily. (Minnesota's currently testing about 8,600 people a day at most.)

By then, more than a month after business closures and controversial stay-at-home orders went into effect, some 700 Minnesotans had been hospitalized and nearly 300 had died. Untold more were infected and contagious.



SUSAN DU

The Minnesota Department of Health webpage listing every COVID testing center in the state was in constant flux. Large areas had none, while some sites ran out of tests before 10 a.m. every day, and had to be delisted from the map while they restocked.

Fresh from contributing to the U's efforts, Nelson gave George his personal

diagnostics to out-of-state companies, even if they take days to produce results.

The hardware alone—ventilated biosafety cabinets with ultraviolet filtration, a polymerase chain reaction machine, freezers—would cost Valley Medical about \$100,000. Building out the lab space to house it all doubled the bill. Valley would need to contract registered nurses to col-

Valley's lab techs spend half their days running drug tests, and the other half helping analyze COVID-19 tests.

Valley's laboratory medical director, Dr. Gregory Post.

"There are a lot of risks associated with it because a lot of people just can't afford to be philanthropic," he said. "Dr. George sees the need for his employees. He sees it as a need for the state of Minnesota, and he sees it from the standpoint of repurposing this equipment later on down the road for things he's looking at."

COVID-19 testing would also allow Valley to keep seeing patients safely. Many essential workplaces are screening patients' temperatures as a precaution, but that just isn't effective when many people who come down with COVID-19 never develop a fever.

"It's kind of a false sense of security just doing that and saying you're healthy," Post said. "You listen to Dr. Fauci, anybody, the only way to get a good handle on this pandemic is through testing, period, because in many instances it's an invisible disease."

IV. A NEW WHEEL

Clinic coordinator Rachel McNeill remembers the morning Dr. Ashwin George casually asked which staff would be willing to help him run a COVID-19 pop-up testing center

"There is a way to do this, but we must go around these bottlenecks."

recipe for making a generic COVID-19 test and schooled him on getting it authorized by the FDA.

Even the smallest neighborhood clinic could make a difference, Nelson explained. In other states, even veterinary clinics that test pet excrement for disease were retooling to pitch in.

"Everybody everywhere, big systems, small systems are using out-of-the-box thinking to try and come up with different ways that we can increase test capacity and have it run as smoothly and quickly as possible."

But there's a reason why most Minnesota testing centers are affiliated with large health systems that outsource their

lect samples and hire a specialist with multiple disciplines in laboratory medicine to process them.

All told, it was a rocky investment of more than a quarter of a million dollars, not including the tests themselves.

After COVID-19, Valley could try to pawn equipment for a fraction of its cost, or reuse it for things like STD screening. Currently there's no way to totally validate a drug test other than to watch patients as they pee. This genomics equipment would allow Valley to identify urine samples using DNA—a far less invasive option.

But from a profitability standpoint, the clinic would be lucky to break even, said

in the parking lot of Valley Medical. It caught everybody off-guard.

The doctor explained that testing would entail direct contact with patients. Collecting nasal secretions would require swabbing the deep, brain-tickling juncture of the nose and throat with something that looks like an articulated Q-tip. Most people wouldn't have felt anything like it before. They'd sneeze or cough, potentially spraying COVID-19 straight into the collector's face. Those who weren't comfortable being near the operation could help with the administrative side—phone calls, billing, and checking medical supply vendors multiple times a day for things like latex gloves.

McNeill, who starts medical school in the fall and has ambitions of becoming a large hospital director someday, was excited to enlist.

"I don't know of any other clinics that are doing this," she says. "When I get to tell my family what I'm doing, they're super proud. This is something I'm going to remember. And if I were working somewhere else, I wouldn't get the opportunity."

A juggernaut of moving pieces, simultaneous action and contemplation, had to fit together for Valley to start testing in such a short time. The Minnesota Department of Health dispatched positive COVID-19 samples so Valley could validate its homemade test and seek FDA emergency use authorization. Burnsville fast-tracked building permits. Highland Construction Services built a lab to spec in three weeks, finishing the final touches as the first samples of the virus were being broken down next door in a small office used for temporary storage.

Because the clinic couldn't buy more than its normal allocation of personal protective equipment from its vendors, Valley commissioned 100 homemade masks from local seamstress Victoria Kalinin, who did alterations for Dr. Svetlana Zaydman in normal times. Kalinin, whose husband has brain cancer and recently underwent surgery, now spends all her spare time making masks for sale and donation. Valley's COVID-19 collections staff wear N95 masks. Everyone else, including the doctors, wear cloth ones.

One month after George asked who wanted to work in the parking lot, signs promoting COVID-19 testing popped up in the Cliff Cove neighborhood, directing traffic to Valley Medical. An orange tent sat on the lawn, adjacent to dedicated spots for patients to park. A knot of extension cords connecting computers snaked out of an open window and laced a nearby picnic table.

As a man drove up in a black SUV, Valley medical assistant Nupur Kamat, decked out in scrubs, gloves, N95 mask, and a face shield, explained what the test would entail.

Hillary Schmalz, a registered nurse laid off by Regions hospital after the governor suspended elective surgeries, advanced with swab in hand. It's a seconds-long maneuver, but it caused the man to hack.

"That sucks. You guys are evil," he croaked when she finished, making the women laugh apologetically.

The collection kit consists of a nasopharyngeal swab and a lip gloss-sized tube of sterile transport saline. The sample gets mixed with a chemical solution that breaks down the human cells and isolates the virus's RNA, which is extracted and fed into a polymerase chain reaction machine, a piece of equipment the size of a Xerox. The machine cycles the temperature of the virus up and down repeatedly, causing it to multiply. Because viruses are invisible even to the microscopic eye, they must be copied millions of times over to detect. Making more copies creates more chromophores—atoms that reflect a signal when the machine flashes them with a laser, announcing the presence of coronavirus.

People tested at Valley get results texted to them within 24 hours. If they're positive, they'll also receive a phone call from the clinic with instructions for continuing care.

Valley's patients get tested for free. But everyone else is welcome as well. Insurance will cover anyone found to have COVID-19 symptoms by a primary doctor. The asymptomatic can also get tested for \$75 out-of-pocket.

If the virus resurges in the fall as some experts predict, George says Valley stands ready to continue testing through the year. He hopes to soon offer blood tests to screen for antibodies in those who suspect they've already contracted and recovered from the virus.

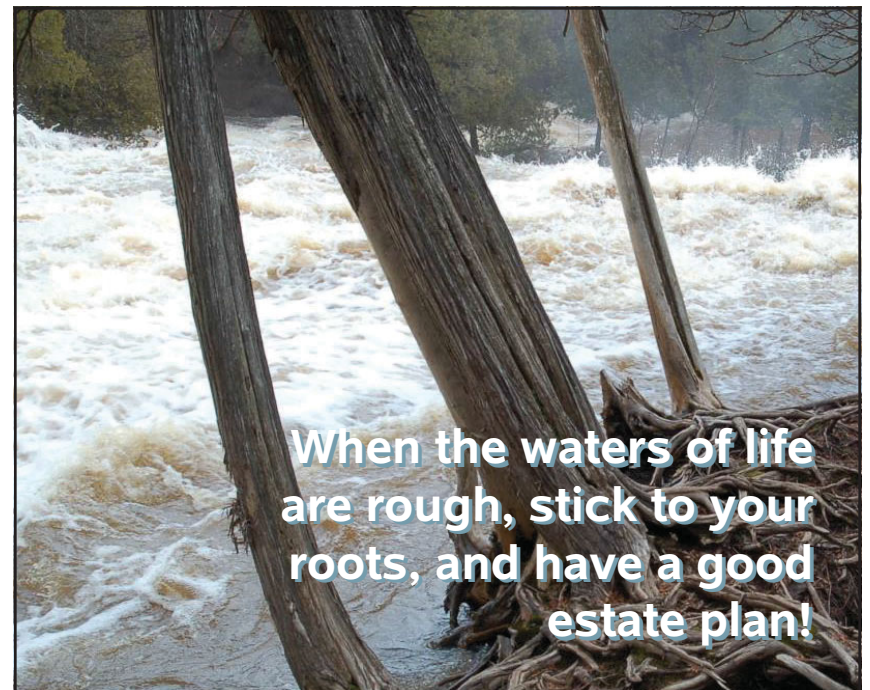
On Valley's first day of coronavirus testing, only one patient stopped by. Within a week, there were 100 a day. Yet Valley has the capacity to run 10 times as many samples.

George says his next challenge is convincing health systems to refer their patients to him. Large hospitals that have chosen to use commercial test kits are still beholden to supply shortages, forcing them to restrict testing to healthcare workers and people with symptoms. Not everyone can get that peace of mind.

"We are a small company, but we can help," George says.

The people trickling through so far are getting tested ahead of visiting older relatives, going in for surgery, and returning to work as Minnesota cautiously resumes business.

"The country wants everybody to go back to work. Companies are reopening. Employees have no way to get tested, so they're coming to us. We wanted to help the big health systems. Right now we're helping people get back to work safely. Either way, that's a nice feeling." 



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Spell-checking the Marquee
Feat. Making Sure Front Facade Says
"Parkway", not "Parkview"

Monday, June 1 || 12:00 pm
**Learning French Literature
to Win Over Andie McDowell**
feat. Craig, House Manager

Saturday, May 30 || 1:00 pm
The Neverending Story (2020)
Saturday Matinee

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**Freaking Out When the
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COURTESY OF SHANNAN PAUL

CHAOS COMEDY

Miss Shannan Paul helps us laugh through adversity

BY PATRICK STRAIT

Most comics live to kill. Being onstage and getting laughs is usually the greatest accomplishment a standup can experience. But Miss Shannan Paul, who has been doing standup locally for more than 15 years, had reached a point where the laughs weren't enough.

"I had these moments on the road where it just wasn't enough to kill it," she says. "I love comedy and I love audiences—and yeah, people would enjoy my shows and have a good time—but what was more fulfilling to me was when people would come up to me afterward and say things like, 'Oh, that sounds just like my cousin,' or 'You made me feel a lot better about

this thing.' So that got me thinking about how I could figure out a way to do more with my art and actually help people."

She figured it out, and recently launched a web mini-series, *Miss Shannan's Comedy Through the Chaos*. Each week, Paul and a rotating cast of comedians discuss a topic that typically doesn't seem like something to laugh about.

"It's a series of performers talking about real-life, genuine things, and how they process them through humor," she explains.

The first episode, released on Mother's Day, focused on parents, from the challenges of raising kids during a pandemic to stories of managing a parent struggling with Alzheimer's. Upcoming episodes will tackle mental health and mental illness, addiction and recovery, and being fired and managing unemployment. It's heavy content, but it's presented in a way that helps people find the humor in... chaos.

"I'm really lucky because I know a lot of people who either do material about some of these things or have stories about how they've dealt with tough times," she says. "Everybody that I've asked to be a part of this has been very enthusiastic."

Creating a brand-new web series in the middle of a quarantine hasn't exactly been easy, but a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board and a willing partner in New Hope Cinema Grill have helped make Miss Shannan's vision come to life.

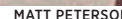
"I was really fortunate to get the Minnesota State Arts Board grant to fund this," she says. "It felt really good that while people were being laid off, I was able to pay people and infuse some money back into the community. And the New Hope Cinema Grill is a great partner. I've done numerous shows there, and when we realized we wouldn't be able to do these shows live, they said we could use the theater to shoot since it's just a dark space right now."

A new episode will be released online every Sunday night at 7 p.m. from now until Fourth of July weekend. Shows will feature comics including Tiffany Norton, Mike Heraly, and Michael Thorne, along with experts such as mental health coaches and addiction counselors who can provide best practices for managing.

While each episode has plenty of jokes and standup sets, Paul says the most interesting part is getting to know the performers offstage.

"We already know that all of these people are funny," she says. "This is a chance to get to know people from a slightly different perspective—but it's still going to be funny."

Episodes are available on Facebook and on YouTube at [ComedyThroughTheChaos.IG](#)



Peterson says the idea for this demonic contraption came to him after his own Batman villain-esque experience with an evil ice cream man. When he was 10 years old, Peterson says, he flagged down a jangly truck, eager to get a cool, creamy treat, and realized he didn't have any money in his Ninja Turtle swimming trunks. He

Scary northeast Minneapolis ice cream truck
has heavy metal, no ice cream

As happens in so many good villain backstories, Peterson became the very thing that haunted and maimed him as a child: an evil ice cream man who did not provide ice cream. He got the truck in 2009, spent a couple of years fixing it up, investing and reinvesting in break-

It's glorious.

Anyway, that's what he told them about his rock and roll nativity scene in 2012, which included a Santa Claus hanging from a noose. **CP**

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Breznys

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): “The best of my nature reveals itself in play, and play is sacred,” wrote the feisty Aries author Karen Blixen, who sometimes used the pen name Isak Dinesen. The attitude described in that statement helps illuminate the meaning of another one of her famous quotations: “I do not think that I could ever really love a woman who had not, at one time or another, been up on a broomstick.” In my interpretation of this humorous remark, Blixen referred to the fact that she had a strong preference for witchy women with rascally magical ways. I bring this to your attention, Aries, because I’m inviting you to cultivate a Blixen-like streak of sacred play and sly magic in the coming days.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus music legend Willie Nelson has played the same guitar since 1969. He calls it “my horse,” and named it after Trigger, a famous horse in Hollywood films. Although Nelson still loves the tones that come from his instrument, it’s neither sleek nor elegant. It’s bruised with multiple stains and has a jagged gash near its sound hole. Some Tauruses want their useful things to be fine and beautiful, but not Willie. Having said that, I wonder if maybe he will finally change guitars sometime soon. For you Bulls, the coming months will be time to consider trading in an old horse for a new one.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): I’ve got a message for you, courtesy of poet Lisel Mueller. I think her wisdom can help you thrive in the coming weeks. She writes, “The past pushed away, the future left unimagined, for the sake of the glorious, difficult, passionate present.” Of course, it’s always helpful for us to liberate ourselves from the oppressive thoughts of what once was in the past and what might be in the future. But it’ll be especially valuable for you to claim that superpower in the coming weeks. To the degree that you do, the present will be more glorious and passionate and not so difficult.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): When Lewis Carroll’s fictional heroine Alice visits the exotic underground realm known as Wonderland, she encounters two odd men named Tweedledee and Tweedledum. The latter tells her, “You know very well you’re not real.” He’s implying that Alice is merely a character in the dream of a man who’s sleeping nearby. This upsets her. “I am real!” she protests, and breaks into tears. Tweedledum presses on, insisting she’s just a phantom. Alice summons her courageous wisdom and thinks to herself, “I know they’re talking nonsense, and it’s foolish to cry about it.” I suspect you Cancerians may have to deal with people and influences that give you messages akin to those of Tweedledum. If that happens, be like Alice.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): “The less you fear, the more power you will have,” says the rapper known as 50 Cent. I agree with him. If you can dissolve even, say, 25 percent of your fear, your ability to do what you want will rise significantly, as will your influence and clout. But here’s the major riddle: How exactly can you dissolve your fear? My answers to that question would require far more room than I have in this horoscope. But here’s the really good news, Leo: In the coming weeks, you will naturally have an abundance of good insights about how to dissolve your own fear. Trust what your intuition tells you. And be receptive to clues that serendipity brings you.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): For his film *Parasite*, Virgo filmmaker Bong Joon-ho received Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay. In his natal horoscope, Joon-ho has Pluto conjunct his sun in Virgo, and during the time *Parasite* began to score major success, Saturn and Pluto were making a favorable transit to that powerful point in his chart. I’m expecting the next six months to be a time when you can make significant progress toward your own version of a Joon-ho style achievement. In what part of your life is that most likely to happen? Focus on it. Feed it. Love it.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): According to my analysis of the astrological omens, the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to seek out, seduce, and attract luck. To inspire you in this holy task, I’ll provide a prayer written by Hoodoo conjurer Stephanie Rose Bird: “O sweet luck, I call your name. Luck with force and power to make change, walk with me and talk through me. With your help, all that can and should be will be!” If there are further invocations you’d like to add to hers, Libra, please do. The best way to ensure that good fortune will stream into your life is to have fun as you draw it to you.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Scorpio comedian John Cleese does solo work, but many of his successful films, albums, stage shows, and TV programs have arisen from joining forces with other comedians. “When you collaborate with someone else on something creative,” he testifies, “you get to places that you would never get to on your own.” I propose you make this your temporary motto, Scorpio. Whatever line of work or play you’re in, the coming weeks will offer opportunities to start getting involved in sterling synergies and symbioses. To overcome the potential limitations of social distancing, make creative use of Zoom and other online video conferencing.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): “Wherever I am, let me never forget to distinguish want from need,” vows author Barbara Kingsolver. “Let me be a good animal,” she adds. That would be a stirring prayer to keep simmering at the forefront of your awareness in the next six weeks. According to my understanding of the astrological omens, you’ll be getting clear signals about the differences between your wants and needs. You will also discover effective strategies about how to satisfy them both in the post-pandemic world, and fine intuitions about which one to prioritize at any particular time.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Writing some Chinese characters can be quite demanding. To make “biáng,” for example, which is used in the name for a certain kind of noodle, you must draw 58 separate strokes. This is a good metaphor for exactly what you should avoid in the coming weeks: spending too much time and devoting too much thought and getting wrapped up in too much complexity about trivial matters. Your focus should instead be on simple, bold approaches that encourage you to be crisp and decisive.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Singer-songwriter Jill Scott is strongly committed to her creative process. She tells us, “I was once making a burger for myself at my boyfriend’s house and a lyric started pouring out and I had to catch it, so I ran to another room to write it down, but then the kitchen caught fire. His cabinets were charred, and he was furious. But it was worth it for a song.” My perspective: Scott’s level of devotion to the muse is too intense for my tastes. Personally, I would have taken the burger off the stove before fleeing the scene to record my good idea. What about you, Aquarius? According to my analysis, you’re in a phase when creative ideas should flow even better than usual. Pay close attention. Be prepared to capture as much of that potentially life-altering stuff as possible.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): To protect ourselves and others from the pandemic, most of us have been spending more time than usual at home—often engaged in what amounts to enforced relaxation. For some of us, that has been a problem. But I’m going to propose that it will be the opposite of a problem for you in the next three weeks. In my astrological opinion, your words to live by will be this counsel from author and philosopher Mike Dooley: “What if it was your downtime, your lounging-in-bed-too-long time, that made possible your greatest achievements? Would they still make you feel guilty? Or would you allow yourself to enjoy them?”

CROSSWORD

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65						66					67			

LIKE A BOSS
BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Ultimate object?
- 5 ___ voce
- 10 Key with one flat: Abbr.
- 14 “This is bad”
- 15 It’s read in a Nook
- 16 Island nicknamed “The Gathering Place”
- 17 Stir up
- 18 Dry Spanish wine
- 19 Condo, e.g.
- 20 Jobs of Apple
- 23 Bad guy
- 24 Words said flashing one’s badge
- 27 Penne or rigatoni
- 30 Islamic duty
- 33 Islamic holy men
- 34 Sports equipment with a V-shaped groove
- 35 Snap
- 37 Mattar paneer green
- 38 Musk of Tesla
- 41 Slow down, in mus.
- 42 Dues collectors
- 43 Town in Utah
- 44 “Can It Be ___ Simple” (Wu-Tang Clan)
- 46 Saucer crew
- 47 Zoom meeting operators
- 48 Vinyl siding?
- 50 Player who popularized dunking from the foul line
- 51 Page of Google

- 58 Some lawyers: Abbr.
- 60 Constellation with a belt
- 61 Waterloo’s home
- 62 Swell problem?
- 63 Backsides
- 64 Plumbing problem
- 65 Spread choice
- 66 Traitor’s fate, often
- 67 “What ___ can we do?”

Down

- 1 Her archenemy is Swiper
- 2 Chain that serves pancake sliders
- 3 Cutting sound
- 4 Nerves
- 5 Start the rally, maybe
- 6 Award that sound like two letters
- 7 Workbench gizmo
- 8 WWII villain
- 9 Giraffe’s cousin
- 10 Wee-hour time
- 11 They might tidy up some chest hair
- 12 Sashimi fish
- 13 Stick (out)
- 21 Goddess of the dawn
- 22 Gives off
- 25 Breakfast made in a pan
- 26 Whence the phrase “at wit’s end”
- 27 Some aquarium fish
- 28 On an incline

- 29 Evoking John and Paul, say
- 30 One of the Backstreet Boys
- 31 Fancy tie
- 32 Casual Friday outfit
- 35 Quarterback Dawson
- 36 Returns collectors
- 39 It’s new, in Napoli
- 40 Milk, jokingly
- 45 Attends, as a problem
- 47 Time sheet nos.
- 49 Wear down
- 50 Thick
- 52 Basic idea
- 53 Place for old platters
- 54 Chatroom guffaw
- 55 Take it easy
- 56 Pairs
- 57 Stuffing seasoning
- 58 It might be massaged when bruised
- 59 Fifth note

Last Week’s Answer

P	U	T	Z	F	R	O	G	S	T	O	N	E		
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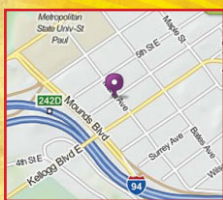


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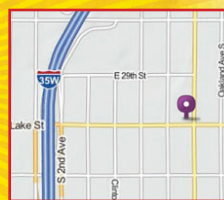
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SAVAGE LOVE

Quarantine Breakup

When should I dump my boyfriend?

I don't want to become one of those people who write to you complaining about how I married someone I wasn't sexually compatible with 10 years ago and now my sex life still sucks. I already know I need to break up with my boyfriend and I was about to do it when he got sick with the flu. This was at the beginning of March. I assumed he'd be sick for a week and then we would have an unpleasant conversation. But then the entire country shut down and my boyfriend was officially diagnosed with COVID-19. So I haven't seen him since the last weekend in



Dan Savage

February, and I've been playing the role of the supportive and worried girlfriend from afar. But it's been hard. Both my parents are in high-risk groups and my mental health has been battered. My boyfriend is finally getting better and I don't know what to do when I finally have to see him again. I'm not breaking up with him because he's a bad person, and I don't want to hurt him but that's exactly what's going to happen. I feel guilty because I'm choosing my happiness over his. I know I shouldn't, Dan, but I do.

FEELING RESENTFUL ABOUT
UNCOUPLING DILEMMA

Pandemic or no pandemic, FRAUD, you can't stay with someone forever to spare that person the routine and surmountable pain of getting dumped. Not breaking up with your boyfriend while he was fighting COVID-19 was the right thing to do, of course, and I don't for a minute question the sincerity of your concern for him. (You want to see the relationship end, FRAUD, not him.) But don't wait until you see him again to break up with him. It'll suck for him, of course, but the world is full of people who got dumped and got over it. And the sooner he gets over you, the sooner he'll meet someone else. For all you know he's been chatting over his backyard fence—at a safe distance—with a neighbor he would be interested in dating if he were single.

I'm 34, non-binary but presenting female. Due to a series of personal tragedies (death,

deportation, illness—it was not a top 10 year), I'm sheltering with my parents. Long story short, I'm 100 percent financially dependent on them right now. The upside is, I've had a lot of time to become comfortable with the fact that I really, really want to mess around with cross-dressing. I would love to get a binder and a masc getup and haircut and just see how that feels. My parents will want to know "what this means" and they won't take "fuck if I know" for an answer. It will be a long time (maybe years) before I'm either eligible for disability or ready to work again, and I just can't wait that long. So

much of my life has already passed me by and I'm tired of waiting for a "right time." But binders and clothes and haircuts cost money. Keeping masc stuff around the house means people will eventually see it. Again, they'd probably be supportive, but I just want to keep this private. Is there a way to do it?

HOPING FOR A THIRD OPTION

Other than winning the lottery and moving out on your own tomorrow, HFATO, there's no third option here. You're going to have to pick your poison: risk having an awkward conversation with parents who are likely to be supportive, or continue to wait—possibly for years—before you start exploring your gender presentation. The choice seems obvious to me.

Got in an argument recently about pegging and its original definition: "a woman fucking a man in the ass with strap-on dildo." I feel it's moved beyond that and now means anyone wearing a strap-on fucking anyone else in the ass. My friends insisted that only a man can be pegged, and only by a woman. As the originator of the term, Dan, we turn to you: Can a woman peg another woman?

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Volvo tractor p963452 Illinois VIN# 4V4nC9eh3fn187363; Trailer VIN# 1UYVS253X13819102. Owners and lien holders have the right to reclaim vehicles under MN Statute #168b.07. Available for retrieval at Tyson's Towing 7077 Hwy 13 W, Savage MN 55378. 612-978-3705.

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Volunteer Opportunities: Response to COVID-19
In order to support community needs created by the Coronavirus outbreak, HandsOn Twin Cities has created a special Volunteer Hub with opportunities and guidelines for volunteering.

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<http://www.northpointhealth.org/>

Medical Reserve Corps

The Medical Reserve Corps of Ramsey County brings together local health professionals and other volunteers to help the Ramsey County community prepare for and respond to public health emergencies. They aim to have volunteers ready to assist medical response professionals during large-scale emergencies that threaten local public health.
<https://www.ramseycounty.us/>

Pack Emergency Food Boxes

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